

CASSA Annual General Meeting 2015



**COUNCIL OF AGENCIES SERVING SOUTH ASIANS
(CASSA)**

**Annual General Meeting
Wednesday, June 17th, 2015**

**Friends House
60 Lowther Ave, Toronto, M5R 1C7**

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Agenda

Council of Agencies Serving South Asians (CASSA)
Annual General Meeting
June 17th, 2015
Friends House

5:30pm – 6:00pm

Registration, Networking and Refreshments

6:00pm – 6:45pm

Welcome To Annual General Meeting
Approval of Draft Agenda
Approval of last AGM Minutes
President's Report
Executive Director's Report
Approval of Auditor's Report – Appointment of Auditor
Nomination Report and Election of New Board Members
Adjournment of Business

6:45pm – 7:00pm

Volunteer and Board Appreciation

7:00pm – 7:30pm

Keynote Speaker: Mr. Baldev Mutta, CEO of Punjabi Community Health Services
Topic: "South Asian Health Policy and Coalition Building"

South Asian Health Strategy Task Force Launch

South Asian Health Strategy Preliminary Report Release

7:30pm – 8:30pm

Dinner and Networking

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AGM Minutes of CASSA – June 26th, 2014 at Friends House, Toronto

The meeting was called to order by Maya Bhullar, Chair of the Board. The motion to approve the agenda was made by Mohan Swaminathan and seconded by Anu Sharma. Anjum Sultana made the motion to approve the previous AGM minutes, seconded by Jawad Bhatti.

Chair's Report

As the Chair of CASSA Board, Maya presented the report to the attendees. CASSA's Executive Director, Neethan Shan, was on a leave of absence early this year so another staff member Jasmine Lobo stepped in to manage day to day activities of the office. Capacity Creators and Trillium Gift of Life are the two flagship projects of CASSA at present. In addition we have Law Foundation and Civic Education projects also in the running. We need to bring more awareness about organ donation especially in the Tamil and Punjabi communities. CASSA's Generation of Change and Brown Canada projects will continue to run with the help of volunteers regardless of not having any funding.

Executive Director's Report

Neethan Shan presented the Executive Director's report for 2013. He gave updates on CASSA's activities in different projects. We now have over 100 agencies as our members. In the 2nd year of Capacity Creators, we made the sector more inclusive. Trillium Gift of Life has been a rewarding project for staff and volunteers. Our work has made a real difference in the "Be a donor Campaign" with the South Asian community where increased awareness has led to willingness to be a donor. Toronto Mela was organized successfully for the second time in 2013. This is a unique Pan South Asian festival to be organized by a nonprofit agency where performers are not Bollywood -centric and come from diverse cultures. Last year's Health Equity conference was a launch pad to understanding Ontario-wide health strategy. Now our focus will be on South Asian strategy. Our Generations of Change project focused on South Asian girls in its 1st year, women in the 2nd year and senior women in its third year and aimed at empowering women in fighting patriarchy and stereotypes.

Approval of Auditor's Report

The Auditor's report was read by Anu Sharma. The motion to approve it was made by Anjum Sultana and seconded by Jawad Bhatti. The motion to approve David Burkes as the Auditor for 2014 was made by Farhat Hasan and seconded by Nasima Akter.

Nomination report and Election of new Board members

Outgoing Board members Mohammad Hayat and Noor Baig were thanked for their contribution to the Board. The motion to approve Shaji John as a new member was moved by Kripa Sekhar and seconded by Jasmine Lobo.

Adjournment of Business

The motion to adjourn the business was made by Maya Bhullar and seconded by Anu Sharma.

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Message from the Chair - Board of Directors Council of Agencies Serving South Asians (CASSA)

On behalf of my colleagues on the Board, staff members and volunteers, I take great pleasure in welcoming you to this Annual General Meeting of CASSA.

2014 was an eventful year for CASSA. Last year, we had celebrated our 26th anniversary as a community organization working for equality and social justice for South Asians. That gave us a great opportunity to look back in the rear-view mirror and take stock of our goals and objectives. It also acted as a springboard for our new 5-year Strategic Plan that will take us to 2020. We identified 5 Strategic Priorities going forward: Health Equity, Women's Rights, Anti-Racism, Immigration & Settlement and Poverty Reduction.

During 2014, CASSA was active in several key projects. In collaboration with the Trillium Gift of Life Network, CASSA staff and volunteers, under the direction of the Executive Director and the Board, orchestrated the “Be a Donor” health promotion campaign encouraging South Asians to register for organ and tissue donations. The campaign helped to spread awareness, to educate and remove stigmas attached to organ and tissue donation. Another issue that CASSA undertook was the Awareness Campaign about changes to immigration sponsorship, refugees and citizenship processes. The end of last year also turned out to be a great beginning for our Brown Canada campaign when we held our 1st annual Brown Canada Summit in December of 2014 at York University.

CASSA is a member-focused grassroots organization that would not be able to meet its mandate without the tireless dedication of its staff and volunteers who offer their time and skills. We are also beholden to our diverse member organizations for their valuable support. My fellow board colleagues and I take this opportunity to appreciate and thank all who have contributed to the growth and success of CASSA.

Sincerely,

Mohan Swaminathan
Board Chair

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Message from the Executive Director Council of Agencies Serving South Asians (CASSA)

Dear Friends of CASSA:

I am delighted to share with you the highlights of our work in 2014 and our plans for moving forward in 2015. CASSA has continued to strengthen its fight for social and economic justice in the past year. Thank you for your amazing support and engagement in CASSA. With your support, we were able to undertake many successful campaigns, events, initiatives and projects.

In 2014, we conducted a grassroots campaign to increase organ and tissue donation registrations within the South Asian communities in the GTA. We had over a hundred different activities that reached tens of thousands of South Asians to share information about organ and tissue donation registrations. In 2014, we saw over 1000 reach in the online registration campaign run directly through CASSA. We believe that we would have made a huge impact beyond the online registration in not only creating the space for this critical conversation but also to have community stakeholders take on ownership of the cause. In 2015, we are focused on getting community led drives where the ownership and leadership is shifted to the various stakeholders in the community.

The Capacity Creators Project, a three year initiative that we had begun in 2013, reached new heights in 2014, engaging hundreds of residents in Peel Region and Toronto in areas related to arts, recreation and environment. This project has bridged and connected many “mainstream” organizations with trained and willing contributors and volunteers from South Asian and immigrant communities. In 2015, we will wrap up year 3 with further research, training, special projects and stakeholder engagement. Our Health Equity Summit was a milestone event with further advancement around the South Asian Health Strategy in Ontario. Our first ever Brown Canada Summit held at York University was well received with over 100 people participating in discussions of variety of social and economic justice topics.

Further details on these projects as well as many more of our highlights are listed throughout this book with further details.

I would like to thank the members of our dedicated and hardworking staff team for their enormous contribution to meeting our objectives and furthering our mandate. My sincere appreciation also goes to the supportive and visionary board of directors who continue to guide and support the work being done by our team. Finally, my special thanks to the hundreds of volunteers who gave their time and energy to make our projects successful. CASSA is proud to be a volunteer driven organization that is supported and facilitated by a team of amazing staff members.

In 2015, we will continue our fight for social and economic justice through the many ongoing projects, special events, awareness campaigns and equity initiatives. At this AGM, we release our five strategic priorities for the next five years 2015-2020. We look forward to working with all of you to advance the plan set forward through those priorities. We request your continued support and involvement in CASSA in the upcoming months and years, as a member and as a volunteer.

Thank you for your continued support, guidance and involvement.

In Solidarity,
Neethan Shan
Executive Director

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CASSA 2014 Highlights from few of Our Projects

CapaCITY Creators Project

The Council of Agencies Serving South Asians (CASSA) has been executing the CapaCITY Creators Project with an aim to encourage participation of South Asians and other immigrants in the arts, recreation and environment sectors in the City of Toronto & Region of Peel. Based on evidence gathered from conducting a needs assessment, we found that South Asians as well as other immigrants face multifaceted barriers to actively participate in the arts, recreation and environmental sectors. As a result, the Capacity Creators project was designed to increase participation, nurture community engagement and form long-term partnerships between community members and mainstream organizations across the three sectors.

In the year of 2014, the CapaCITY Creators Project was able to train 70 Capacity Creators as leaders in the arts, recreation and environment sectors. These individuals received Anti-Oppression/Anti-Racism (AOAR), Board Governance as well as Project Planning training as part of their CapaCITY Creators training. They participated in team-building workshops as well and worked in teams to collaboratively work with a mainstream organization to develop, implement and evaluate their own community engagement projects. Overall there were 11 community engagement projects, each with a series of workshops, trainings, concerts, festivals, information sessions and outreach activities in the past year. With the support of Ontario Trillium Foundation, our 70 Capacity Creators directly engaged 2794 community members totaling 5747 (in the past 2 years) overall in City of Toronto and Region of Peel by creating opportunities in the arts, recreation and environment sectors, organizing festivals, sports activities, cultural events, exhibitions, educational workshops, networking events, advocacy groups in Toronto and Peel. Almost 30% of Capacity Creators have found employment in the arts, recreation and environment sectors.

As the CapaCITY Creators mark the end of a successful 2014 in December, we have transitioned in to the 3rd and final year of the CapaCITY Creators Project in 2015. As with previous years, our target this year has been to seek community members who are interested in the arts, recreation or the environment and build their capacity to be leaders in these sectors. This year we will work towards strengthening the partnership between community members/agencies and mainstream organizations across our three sectors of focus. Through such meaningful partnerships and strong collaborations, we have been working towards establishing meaningful projects that effectively improve the participation of South Asians & other immigrants in our sectors of focus. This year we have partnered with a range of community-based organizations for recruitment support such as the *Bangladeshi Canadian Community Services (BCCS)*, *Canadian South Asian Growth & Support Services (CSAGSS)*, *Catholic Crosscultural Services (CCS)*, *United Way Peel and Brampton Multicultural Community Centre (BMCC)*. By the month of April, we had successfully met our recruitment target of 30 participants in Scarborough and 30 participants in Peel. All trainings including Anti-Oppression/Anti-Racism, Board of Governance and Project Planning were completed by May. We are currently working closely with our mainstream partners and our CapaCITY Creators to develop and implement community engagement projects in the summer of 2015. Our mainstream partners remain the same as with previous years including: Toronto Environmental Alliance, Earth Day Canada, Toronto & Region Conservation Authority, Pan Am, City

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of Toronto Parks & Recreation, Scarborough Museum, Scarborough Arts, Art Gallery of Mississauga, and with the addition of our new member City of Mississauga: Culture on a Map.

As part of the projects' research component, we are currently in the process of completing a Year 2 Needs Assessment which focuses on: "Challenges Mainstream Organizations Face When Engaging South Asians & Immigrants in the Arts, Recreation & Environment Sectors". This assessment focuses on identifying challenges as well as best practices in engaging South Asians & other Immigrants in the programs offered by a range of sector organizations. A summary report will be disseminated and can be used to enhance organizational capacity to better engage diverse communities in the sectors of focus.

From the CapaCITY Creators Team, we would like to thank all our CapaCITY Creators, community-based partners as well as our sector partners for their continuous support and dedication towards better engaging South Asians & immigrants in the sectors.

South Asian Gift of Life Campaign

CASSA has been collaborating with the Trillium Gift of Life Network (TGLN) since 2014 to promote organ and tissue donation registration in the South Asian community through the South Asian Gift of Life (SAGL) campaign. In 2014, CASSA initiated an expansive outreach campaign in which staff and volunteers set up information booths at various cultural events and faith locations across the Greater Toronto Area. The SAGL team also conducted presentations on organ and tissue donation awareness in many high schools.

As part of this campaign, CASSA created four personalized pages on the Be a Donor website to direct the South Asian community to register to donate their organs and tissues once they pass away. Since the start of this campaign in 2014, CASSA has led more than 1500 South Asians to register through one of their pages! CASSA's Be a Donor pages are:

1. Beadonor.ca/southasian – with 340+ registrations
2. Beadonor.ca/hindi – with 280+ registrations
3. Beadonor.ca/tamil – with 530+ registrations
4. Beadonor.ca/punjabi – with 350+ registrations

In 2015, the South Asian Gift of Life campaign shifted its focus from individual outreach to building capacity in the South Asian community to take ownership of the campaign and promote it to their own circle of contacts. CASSA has been meeting with various South Asian organizations, media outlets, faith groups, political leaders, and local celebrities to encourage them to champion the SAGL campaign themselves. The goal for 2015 is to have 15 new South Asian registration drives on the Be a Donor website. As of May, 2015 we have 10 confirmed partners for the campaign already! Over the summer of 2015, CASSA will work with each of these partners to promote their campaign and highlight their work as well as outreach for more partners. These are:

1. Afghan Association of Ontario Canada
2. Punjabi Community Health Services
3. South Asian Canadian Health and Social Services
4. Bangladeshi Canadian Community Services
5. Councillor Gurpreet Dhillon (Brampton)

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6. Irwin Nanda (Vice President – Ontario Federation of Labour)
7. Canadian Multicultural Radio
8. Neethan Shan (Executive Director – CASSA)
9. Leha Panchalingam (Volunteer – CASSA)
10. Jawad Bhatti (Board of Directors – CASSA)

CASSA released its first South Asian Gift of Life poster in May 2015 and will work with South Asian community organizations and leaders to promote it. CASSA is also planning a South Asian Gift of Life Week on October 5th to 11th. During this week, CASSA will celebrate its SAGL partners and work together to produce activities and events to encourage registrations for organ and tissue donation in the South Asian communities in the Greater Toronto Area.

Health Equity Summit

South Asian communities are faced with a multitude of health inequities, resulting in disproportionately poorer health outcomes when compared to other ethnic groups in Ontario. In 2010, CASSA, with the direction of Sheela Subramanian, released the report *A Diagnosis for Equity: An Initial Analysis of South Asian Health Inequalities in Ontario*. This report addressed the need to shift attention towards addressing the causes of these underlying inequities, rather than focusing on the consequences of the inequities. Specific suggestions from the report included increased knowledge exchange and transfer between key stakeholders, leading to the creation of CASSA's Health Equity Conference. The formation of the conference was to provide a platform for exchanging knowledge regarding new research and innovative service models to address health concerns within South Asian communities. The 1st annual Health Equity Conference took place in 2010 with a focus on a broad array of topics to both raise awareness on health issues facing South Asian communities, and to address social determinants of health through a health equity lens.

From the positive feedback received from the first conference, health equity conferences have been held annually since. The second conference focused on youth and mental health of marginalized groups in South Asian Communities, while the third conference focused on developing an action plan to reduce health disparities. Last year, CASSA held their 4th Annual Health Equity Summit at the CAMH Centre, with the aim of taking a more action-based, direction focused approach, resulting in name change to summit from conference. The aim of the summit was to promote diversity in practice and leadership within the healthcare sector, while creating the foundations for the South Asian Health Strategy; a strategy for equitable access to health care, South Asian specific health care facilities, improved standards of care, and the provision of culturally-appropriate health services. At the 2014 summit, there were over 80 attendees, and speakers from a variety of backgrounds addressing key areas of health in vulnerable groups and aspects of the health strategy. Overall, the summit was a success due to the help of very dedicated volunteers and knowledgeable guest speakers.

This year, we hope to hold our 5th Annual Health Equity Summit at the CAMH Centre on November 3rd. However, this year moving forward, we will be focusing on a specific population within the South Asian population to have themed summits. This year the focus population and theme of our summit is Health of Seniors in South Asian populations. Another difference this year is the addition of round-table meetings throughout the summer in order to help develop content for the actual summit. We are

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currently working with a team of dedicated volunteers to establish, organize and promote these round-tables and the summit. We aim to have more than a 100 organizations joining us at the summit to facilitate and create an open dialogue on addressing health concerns present in the senior populations of South Asian communities, which can later be incorporated into the South Asian Health Strategy that is being managed by the newly formed Task Force.

Racism Free Ontario

The Racism Free Ontario campaign went from December 10th, 2014 to March 21st, 2015. The campaign's goal was to create broader public awareness so that Ontarians accept and acknowledge that racism still exists. This campaign had multiple parts to it. There was a blog that had 100 updates between the dates of the International Human Rights Day (Dec 10th) and the International Day for Elimination of Racial Discrimination (Mar 21st).

The other goal for this year's campaign is to get an Anti-Racism directorate established in Ontario. We are now working on getting the Ontario Government to pass a motion/resolution/legislation to create an Anti-Racism Directorate. Our petition drive is still going strong, and we are still working on getting organizations to endorse. So far, we have these organizations that have endorsed the campaign so far:

- Association of Management, Administrative and Professional Crown Employees of Ontario
- African Canadian Social Development Council
- Bangladeshi Canadian Community Services
- Canadian Arab Federation
- Canadian Federation of Students Ontario
- Chinese Canadian National Council Toronto Chapter
- Colour of Poverty
- Council of Agencies Serving South Asians
- Harmony Hall Centre for Seniors
- Hispanic Social Development Council
- Labour Education Centre
- Scadding Court Community Centre
- South Asian Legal Clinic of Ontario
- TTCRiders
- Toronto Acorn
- University of Toronto Mississauga Students Union
- Urban Alliance on Race Relations
- York Federation of Students

Lastly we held a forum on the Day for Elimination of Racial Discrimination that talked about racism in Ontario today. Also, we are organizing an information session in July to get engage more organizations to sign on to the campaign. We will also try and work on securing funding for next year's Racism Free Ontario campaign so it will be even stronger.

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Alternative Planning Group

The Alternative Planning Group is a group of community organizations working together to reduce systematic barriers that racialized communities face when it comes to city planning and accessing city services. The group consists of the Chinese Canadian National Council Toronto Chapter, African Canadian Social Development Council, Hispanic Development Council, and the Council of Agencies Serving South Asians.

We are currently getting the structure for the APG more stabilized. We are changing the name of the group to Equity Toronto: The Alternative Planning Council. We had a strategic planning session where we came up with a framework of what we see the council doing in the next three years.

A forum was held as a culminating event after many roundtables exploring what barriers women, senior, and youth who are racialized face when it comes to accessing city services. The forum at City Hall explored the issues, lived experiences, and potential solutions. We are also underway to push for certain policy changes at the City Hall. We have written up a report from the many roundtables the APG have conducted over the past year. This includes recommendations that the City can undertake to reduce barriers for racialized women, youth, and seniors. We will set up meetings with city officials and push to move these recommendations forward in 2015.

Two Other Upcoming Special Projects

Toronto Mela 2015

CASSA with the support of City of Toronto is proudly presenting its 3rd annual Toronto Mela: A South Asian Summer Festival on August 22, 2015 at the Malvern Recreation Centre from 2 p.m. to 9 p.m.

The aim of Toronto Mela is to celebrate cultural diversity and to increase public awareness about the contributions of South Asian communities to Canada and the world. CASSA is taking an effort to bring people of Greater Toronto Area together by celebrating diversity through South Asian art, literature, dance music and food. Over a thousand people is expected to attend the event including elected representatives, media representatives, community leaders and the GTA residents. Moreover, we are expecting over 40 non-profit and business agencies to attend the event to promote their products and services.

This event will be a fun filled day with games, free gifts, food, and stage performances. One unique feature of this event is that it is a volunteer driven project. In continuation of previous years we are actively recruiting 100 energetic and enthusiastic volunteers to join the Toronto Mela event coordination team.

The activities at Toronto Mela 2015 includes:

Live Music Performances

Classical & Folk Dances

South Asian Cuisine

Kids Activity Corner

Stalls of non-profit and Business agencies about their services and products

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Stalls of South Asian products, souvenirs, jewelers, and handicrafts

Civic Literacy Campaign

The Civic Literacy Campaign is a six month campaign that began in June as an initiative to build an understanding of civic engagement in light of the federal elections that will be happening in October. This is the second time that CASSA has decided to run this campaign, the first time being for the 2014 municipal elections. The idea to run this campaign came from the fact that throughout the elections process. This campaign is a way that CASSA hopes to engage South Asians in and about the federal elections and the importance of voting and voicing their opinions.

The intent of the Civic Literacy Campaign is to recruit 15 volunteers from different parts of Scarborough and train them to lead community conversations and workshops about civic literacy as it relates to the Federal Elections. Volunteers will be non-partisan, who will speak about the platforms of each political party, what policies will affect them and how they can voice their opinion. Throughout the campaign, volunteers will understand how to engage community members in order to start conversations, manage issues, and inform the public about different events happening in regards to the federal election.

In June, we will be having two training sessions with volunteers to prepare them for engaging with communities. After June, we hope to start meeting with community members, organize town halls, and create documents with information about the elections available in several different South Asian languages.

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CASSA Board of Directors

Slate 2015-2016

Returning Directors:

Mohan Swaminathan

Mohan Swaminathan is an accomplished advertising, marketing and communications professional with almost two decades of global experience in consumer goods, publishing and real estate. Mohan is a creative writer and originator of ideas and strategies to sell, persuade, communicate and market virtually anything. Currently Mohan is Creative Director at Montana Steele Advertising, a reputed ad agency in Toronto. Before moving to Canada just a few years ago, Mohan worked in Dubai with internationally renowned ad agency DDB, spinning award-winning campaigns for Volkswagen, Sony and HSBC. Prior to that, Mohan worked in the Mumbai ad world, pitching Unilever brands to the world's fastest growing consumer market. A true global citizen, Mohan is fluent in 7 languages and a passionate advocate of cultural diversity in all walks of life. At CASSA, Mohan looks forward to leveraging his diversity skills and experience, shining a spotlight on deep-rooted prejudices and working to raise the profile of newcomers to Canada.

Anjum Sultana

Anjum Sultana has been a board member with CASSA for the past two years and is excited to go into her third year of service for the board. Anjum is very passionate about health equity and social justice and that has led to her current role as a Masters of Public Health Student at the Dalla Lana School of Public Health at the University of Toronto. For our MPH degree, she has specialized in Social and Behavioural Health Sciences, Community Development and Global Health with interests in Public Health Policy. Anjum has worked and volunteered at various institutions with a focus on reducing racial health inequities such as eHealth Ontario, Mount Sinai Hospital, Sick Kids Hospital, Alliance for South Asian AIDS Prevention and Womens College Research Institute. She is deeply committed in developing equitable high-quality health care systems and has focused on this in her work in Ghana, Kenya, Tanzania and with IMAGINE, a health promotion initiative affiliated with the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Toronto, that provides clinical, curative, illness prevention services in their weekly clinic and through outreach efforts to focus on health promotion and community development. In the future, she is interested in working on public health policy analyst for governments and international institutions and is currently completing a practicum as a Health Policy and Communications Analyst at the Association of Ontario Health Centres.

Anu Sharma

Anu Sharma began working in the nonprofit sector since 1995 with one of CASSA'S member agencies PCHS. Anu began as a youth coordinator with PCHS and within a few years became the president. Since her work with PCHS, Anu also worked as a youth settlement worker with Newcomer youth at Culturelink, as well as a Settlement counselor at COSTI.

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For the past 8 years Anu has been organizing low paid workers across the country and has successfully organized workers in the Cleaning industry in Vancouver, Ottawa, Toronto and Halifax. Anu is passionate about working within the labour movement and being able to work with newcomers in a different capacity.

Jawad Bhatti

Jawad Bhatti is a long standing resident of the Toronto area who attended the University of Toronto receiving his Bachelor of Arts followed by a Bachelors and Master's Degree in Social Work from York University. His major area of research was the impact of the non-recognition of foreign credentials on newcomers to Canada. Jawad's experience ranges from acting as a constituency assistant for MP Olivia Chow, working as a child and family mental health therapist with the Scarborough Hospital and was a case manager for a youth residential treatment centre in York Region. Jawad currently works as a mental health therapist for the Scarborough Hospital Justice and Mental Health Program working with individuals dealing with major mental illness who are involved in the criminal justice system. Jawad also operates Positive Outcome Services offering individual and family therapy solutions for a wide range of clients.

Nasima Akter

Nasima Akter has her doctorate in Environmental Technology and Management. She has worked in the field of research (Environment, Health, and Social Research), evaluation, monitoring, and policy implementation for the past 18 years; She also taught at BRAC University Bangladesh for more than 5 years; after coming to Canada she was with Eng-consult LTD., Canada for two years as Environmental Specialist; Nasima is currently Executive Director of Bangladeshi-Canadian Community Services, based in Toronto.

Her research area includes Informal Economy among the immigrants, Seniors' Health, Health and Well-being for immigrant Youth, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), In-door air pollution, Medical Waste Management (MWM), Alternative Energy, Climate Change, Natural Resource Conservation, Health and Livelihood, etc. Nasima is a Certified Canadian Environmental Professional (EP) in the field of Research and Development, Waste Management, Site Assessment and Reclamation, and Education and Training. She has in excess of more than 42 published papers to her credit.

Ramraajh Sharvendiran

Ramraajh is the Tamil Outreach and MSM Prevention coordinator at the Alliance for South Asian AIDS Prevention (ASAAP), working with men who love men to educate and create a safe space for the discussion of sexuality and sexual health in South Asian communities. Born and raised in Toronto, Ram harbours a deep passion for advocacy around all human rights, especially those around race, gender, and sexual orientation. He holds Honours Degrees in Communications from York University and also volunteers his time as a radio host of a weekly queer segment at a local community radio station. Ramraajh hopes to bring his lived and learnt experience as a Queer Tamil cis-gendered male to the work at CASSA.

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Seema Nadarajah

Seema Nadarajah holds a Master's of Social Work degree with a focus in child welfare and mental health. She is presently working at the South Asian Legal Clinic of Ontario (SALCO) as a Community Legal Worker/Social Worker, where she engages in poverty law work related to income security and immigration matters. Seema has been asked to speak at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) on her thesis work of the challenges persons with a serious mental illness face in the child welfare system. Moreover, she has been a consultant on a variety of projects, the most recent of which is reviewing the concerns of Toronto Police Service's lethal use of force and de-escalation techniques in dealing with individuals with mental health issues for the Office of the Independent Police Review Director (OIPRD). Seema hopes to work in solidarity with the community and CASSA at large to bring awareness to issues affecting the South Asian diaspora.

Shaji John

Shaji John Kangapadan is an expert project manager with 15+ years of experience in the nonprofit sector in Canada and abroad. He brings a wealth of experience in managing emergency and sustainable development projects. He had worked with the Canadian Jesuits International and Evergreen Brick Works in Toronto. Before coming to Canada, Shaji worked in India and Afghanistan with various NGOs. Shaji has a Master's degree in Sociology and a Certificate in Canadian Social Work Practice. In 2011, he was chosen as a Diversity Fellow, a leadership program of Civic Action Alliance awarded to select professionals. Deeply committed to the principles equity and access, Shaji is passionate about progressive social change.

Bobby Singh

Bobby Singh is a successful entrepreneur, business professional with nearly two decades of experience in launching start-up businesses. He has also worked within both retail and consumer packaged goods industries advising stakeholders within finance and strategy capacities. At present Bobby works as a strategy and finance consultant focussing in area of operations management. Prior to joining CASSA, Bobby was a Director serving on Justice for Children and Youth's (JFCY) board for several years and is excited to leverage his learnings and unique perspectives from JFCY to assist CASSA with its mandate. Bobby graduated from the University of Toronto with Honours BA in Finance and Economics and Honours BSc in Cognitive Psychology. He also graduated from York University's Schulich School of Business with an MBA focused in Strategy, Finance, and International Business.

Proposed Slate of New Directors

Sanga Achakzai

At the age of 15, Sanga Achakzai came to Canada with high hopes for a more secure and prosperous future, a chance to obtain a higher degree of education and an opportunity for leadership in the community she lives in. Sanga graduated from York University in 2008, with a Specialized Honours in International Relations, as well as a French certificate in bilingualism. While her academic background

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served more in project management, research and policy analysis, her work experience has been more in functioning as a front line worker in the not-for-profit sector for over 6 years. Sanga has worked as a settlement worker and volunteer coordinator for 3 years, at the Afghan Women's organization. She also possesses a great degree of skills in proposal writing, coordinating websites, managing projects and conducting research. She currently works at Catholic Cross Cultural Services (CCS), where she coordinates the Community Services Program for women, and also assumes responsibility for volunteer management. Sanga is enthusiastic about social inclusion and social justice for the visible minority, and is exceptionally keen on working with the South Asian community, and assisting them to reach leadership roles to become more visible in Canadian multicultural society.

Initha Subramaniam

Initha started her teaching career as a high school Chemistry and Science teacher in Sydney Australia then a grade 7 teacher at a First Nations Reserve called Ebametoong in Northern Ontario before joining the York Region District School board as a high School teacher and then as a grade 7/8 teacher. Currently as a teacher liaison for Inclusive School and Community Services unit of YRDSB, she works with teachers to implement an inclusive curriculum and equitable practices by providing culturally relevant resources, information and workshops. With students the work involves building capacity in leadership, advocacy and providing support for smooth transitions into their chosen pathways after graduation. By collaborating with school communities, service providers, agencies and parents/guardians allows her to provide inclusive and culturally responsive programs. As a teacher liaison, her work supports activities and initiatives that identify and address barriers for students and families in the schools; while simultaneously promoting inclusion and social cohesion. Her role ensures that all students, regardless of circumstance or social identities, are provided with opportunities and necessary resources in order to achieve.

As a member of the Tamil community in GTA, she is also involved in various programs and projects that work to implement an AOP frame work. She is also part of a team in organizing a nonprofit agency called Children Aide Rehabilitation Education program which in partnership with Tamil youth have built a children home in Tamil Eelam (Northern Sri Lanka) for displaced female identified children. Overall her role as a community activist and as a facilitator of information has formulated her pedagogy to enhance the resilience in marginalized and underserved youth.



Strategic Framework and Strategic Directions for 2015-2020

Our Mission is:

To facilitate the economic, social, political and cultural empowerment of South Asians by serving as a resource for information, research, mobilization, coordination and leadership on social justice issues affecting our communities. Create social change by building alliances and working collaboratively with those who share a vision of empowering all communities to participate in defining Canada's future

CASSA's Vision:

We envision and strive for a Canada free of all forms of discrimination in which all communities are free from marginalization and are fully empowered to participate in defining Canada's political, economic, social and cultural future.

CASSA's Values:

The following values serve as guidelines for our conduct as we implement our mission and work towards our vision:

- ***Social Justice:*** We are committed to working within a social justice framework which promotes equity and empowerment for marginalized peoples and communities.
- ***Anti-oppression, anti-racism, anti-homophobia:*** We strive to incorporate anti-oppressive, anti-racist and anti-homophobic principles and practices in our work.
- ***Responsiveness:*** We strive to work through a variety of consultative and participatory structures and practices to ensure that our work is grounded in the realities and priorities of our communities.
- ***Diversity:*** We recognize and respect the diversity among and within South Asian communities and within Canadian society.
- ***Collaboration and solidarity:*** We are committed to building alliances in order to work collectively towards common aims.
- ***Accountability:*** We are committed to maintaining effective governance, measurement and reporting practices.

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Strategic Directions 2015-2020

1. Immigration and smart settlement:

CASSA, in the next five years, will:

- facilitate process that aim to build more inclusive and welcoming communities in the municipalities outside the City of Toronto
- address issues and concerns impacting refugees in Canada
- continue to focus on reducing employment barriers for newcomers and immigrants
- document histories of South Asians in Canada
- support engagement of immigrants and newcomers in civic processes and civic leadership

2. Poverty Reduction:

CASSA, in the next five years, will:

- create awareness about racialization of poverty and work towards meaningful ways to address it
- initiate campaign to increase the availability and affordability of childcare
- support movements for promotion and protection of rights of all workers, with a focus on South Asians

3. Health Equity:

CASSA, in the next five years, will:

- develop a South Asian Health Strategy for Ontario to get it formally adopted
- initiate a mental health awareness campaign in the South Asian communities
- support research initiation and coordination related to topics involving South Asians and Health (including Social Determinants of Health)
- provide a mechanism for sharing and learning related to Seniors Health within South Asians
- create awareness to increase registrations for organ and tissue donations within South Asians

4. Anti-racism and Anti-oppression:

CASSA, in the next five years, will:

- facilitate development of access and equity policies and procedures for and by South Asian organizations and agencies
- continue anti-racism awareness work through Racism Free Ontario campaign
- initiate and support the campaign to establish an Anti-Racism Directorate in Ontario
- focus on developing youth leadership grounded in anti-racist and anti-oppressive framework

5. Women's Rights:

CASSA, in the next five years, will:

- build capacity for young South Asian women to develop leadership initiatives
- initiate and support prevention initiatives that aim to eliminate gender based abuse, harassment and violence
- train the violence against women (VAW) sector to ensure that their service delivery is responsive, reflective and respectful of the needs and challenges faced by South Asian women.

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CASSA 2014-2015 Staff

This list includes all staff, including part time, short-term contract, summer student positions and full time staff.

2014 Staff

| | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Executive Director | Neethan Shan |
| Finance Coordinator | Farhat Hasan |
| Administrative Assistant | Ateeya Anwari |
| Project Manager | Jasmine Lobo |
| CapaCITY Project Coordinator | Tanzina Islam |
| Fundraising & Event Coordinator | Zulfia Zaher |
| Outreach Worker | Aman Sharma, Antu Hossain, Cajaan Velautham, Saima Hussain, Thurka Sri Rangan, |
| Internship: | Somya Grover, Aysha Butt, Sreedevi Krishnan |

Current Staff

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| Executive Director | Neethan Shan |
| Finance Coordinator | Farhat Hasan |
| Administrative Assistant | Yuko Murakami |
| Project Manager | Samya Hasan |
| Project Coordinator | Antu Hossain |
| Project Assistant | Saima Hussain |
| CapaCITY Project Coordinator | Tanzina Islam |
| Outreach Worker | Thusitha Suriyakumar, Gulet Arale |
| Internship: | Jilani Rajit, Arijit De, Hafeeza Patel, Hiba Hussain |

List of CASSA Volunteers 2014-2015

| | | |
|-----------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Abba Jeylani | Anmol Singh | Aysha Butt |
| Abey Thurai | Anojini | Babitha |
| Adchu | Anondo | Bavi Aravinthan |
| Adit | Anthonia D'Royavo | Bharathy |
| Ajay Gupta | Anupama Sharma | Bineet Bajwa |
| Akhter Ahmed | Arani Sivakumar | Brian Yu |
| Akshay Malhotra | Areef | Candice Tait |
| Akta Sehgal | Arijit De | Caoutham |
| Aman Mansur | Ashok Sripathy | Daanish Akhter |
| Amardeep Sarao | Assia K | Davika Deonarine |
| Amrit Kaur | Avi Sehgal | Dil |
| Anand Ingale | Ayaz Zafar | Dilanthy |
| Aniqa Rahman | Ayesha Arshad | Dilpreet Kaur |
| Anjum Sultana | Ayesha Sharaker | Divya Sreejith |

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|---------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| Dovejot | Jalal Uddin | Mosharraf |
| Dr. Qazi Shafayetul Islam | Janani Sivakumar | Mukur De |
| Ehsanul Haque | Janjot Bajwa | Munira Noor |
| Elizabeth Mathew | Janjot Bajwa | Murukaiyah Vyshnavan |
| Emili Saji | Jasveer Sidhu | Mylini Saposan |
| Faiyaz | Jawad Bhatti | Nafis Hassan Raiyon |
| Farhan Monower | Jilani Rajit | Nahar |
| Farhana | Kara D'Souza | Nala Balarajan |
| Farhana Rahman | Karimah Rahman | Nasima Akter |
| Fariha Bakht | Kashfia Alam | Nayma Ali |
| Farzana Badar | Kavita Bala | Naznin Sultana |
| Fatima Khatun | Keera | Neha Ahmed |
| Flora Devarajah | Kohinoor | Nigar Sultana |
| Gagan Singh | Krismaa Rajasuresh | Nihon Akbar |
| Gagandeep Singh | Krittka | Nikunj Patani |
| Garinder Takhar | Kulthum Noor | Nirogini |
| Garinder Takhar | Kumar Punithavel | Niroja A |
| Gaya Nagendra | Kumuthini.D. Harris | Niveda Illandiraiyan |
| Gerard | Labiba Bakht | Nivedha |
| Ghazia Sartaj | Leha Panchalingam | Olga Quesada |
| Golam Shahjahan | Lishaina Leach | Oralia Olvera Henandez |
| Gowrejan | Lookeshwari Sahadeo | Parminder Kaur |
| Gowri Vishnu | Lucky Akter | Parminder Kaur |
| Gowri Shakthi | Mahbuba Alo | Pavishan |
| Gurinder Kaur | Malaika Fazal | Perakaa Sethukavalan |
| Gurvinder Gill | Manjinder Jassal | Pirgal |
| Gurvinder Gill | Manraj Bhangu | Ponnampalam Thambipillai |
| Habiba Ejaz | Maria Claudia Riano | Poroma |
| Hala Kadis | Mariam Mathew | Pragash |
| Haneen Arshad | Mathura T | Praniya Nesan |
| Harinnya | Maya Bhullar | Praveenaa Sivapalan |
| Hasina Talukder | MD Saiful Alam | Prayalini |
| Hina Uzair | Md. Rabiul Islam | Priya Dhillon |
| Hinna Yusuf | Meena Bhardwaj | Puja Patel |
| Huma Ansari | Meetu Khosla | Rabia Azhar |
| Hunyah Irfan | Mehria Yousefi | Rabia Zaheer |
| Iman Abdella | Mireya Rojas | Rabiya |
| Inthuja Selvaratnam | Mirza | Radhe Sadana |
| Irina Israt | Mohammad Arif Ahmed | Rafay Syed |
| Ismatara Bina | Mohan Swaminathan | Rahat Zaman |
| Jalajah Jokarasa | Momtaz Begum | Ramanan |
| Ramraajh Sharvendiran | Shelly Anjum | |

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|--------------------------|------------------------|
| Ramsha Qamar | Sheron Arul |
| Rani Hoque | Shiamala |
| Raushan Akhter | Shiyana Kulasingham |
| Ravindran | Shorna Jahan |
| Ritu Rajbhandari Duwal | Shova Puri |
| Rizuan Rahman | Shrija Shrestha |
| Roda Gadhane | Sinthu |
| Saba Kadri | Sinthujan Kuganendran |
| Saba Riaz | Sreedevi Krishnan |
| Saba Zanib | Sultana Ahmed |
| Sabrina Sohn | Sumera |
| Saghana Navaratnam | Sumera Rasheed |
| Sahila Subendran | Sumu |
| Sahlla Abbasi | Suniti Das |
| Saima Hussain | Sunjay Mathuria |
| Saima Hussain | Sunny Sharma |
| Sakib Sarker | Syed Tawfik |
| Saleha Farooqui | Tahira Syed |
| Salma Khatun | Tanzina Islam |
| Samina Khan | Taseen Ali |
| Samina Khan | Teresa Gomes |
| Samrin Quader | Teresita Lacson |
| Sandra D'Souza | Tharsy Karunakaran |
| Sangeetha | Thusha Mathikcantan |
| Sanjay | Thusitha Suryakumar |
| Sara Siddiqui | Tiana Clarke |
| Sarah | Urooj Shahzadi |
| Sarah Khan | Uzma Irfan |
| Sarah Ramotar | Vaibhav Chadha |
| Seema Nadarajah | Varleen Sasan |
| Selvakumary Krishnadasan | Vikas Kalia |
| Selvi Krishnadasan | Vinsia |
| Senthoori Siva | Virujan |
| Shairi Islam | Vithieyah Atputharajah |
| Shaji John | Vyshali Murukaiyah |
| Shameem Mohamed | Yalini |
| Shamima Sultana | Zainab Gori |
| Sharmila | Zarrin Jaigirdar |
| SharndEEP Natt | Zohra Ahsan |
| Shelena | Zulfia Zahar |

Acknowledgement of Our Funders for 2014

We would like to appreciate and acknowledge the vital ongoing support for our activities
by:

Human Resources and Skills Development Canada
City of Toronto: Community Festivals Investment Program
City of Toronto: Investing in Neighborhood Initiative
City of Toronto: Community Services Partnership
City of Toronto: Community Safety Initiative
Ontario Trillium Foundation
Trillium Gift of Life Network
Law Foundation

We would like to thank all of our community partners, volunteers and board members who have supported us with all of our projects. Without their help, we would not be able to achieve what we have done in the 2014.

Thank you all for your dedication and for believing in CASSA.

Thank You

for attending CASSA's AGM.

**We look forward to your continued support,
guidance and involvement.**

You or your organization can also become a member of CASSA, if you wish to support our mission/mandate. Please visit our website www.cassa.on.ca for details on our mission, vision, values and strategic priorities. The members will receive a regular update on various happenings in the social services/social justice field in Ontario's South Asian communities.

Annual membership fee is only \$10 for individuals and \$20 for organizations. Joining as a member, will also keep you informed about job opportunities, volunteer opportunities and community events. Please visit our website for more information about becoming a member of CASSA and its benefits.



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Email: cassa@cassa.on.ca